

*The content which follows is a transcript of the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast hosted by Jerry Taylor, KD0BIK. This monthly version of PARP is typically released the last week of each month.*

The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast – Episode number 40.

From the ham shack of KD0BIK, located in Colorful Colorado, this is the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast.

This is show number 40, volume number 3 with a release date of May 31, 2010.

Hello everyone. My name is Jerry Taylor; my amateur radio call sign is KD0BIK and welcome to the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast...Creating Elmers One Podcast at a time. Amateur radio or ham radio is what this podcast is all about. If you are currently studying for your exam or have been in ham radio for years....I'm hopeful this podcast will help you. If it has helped you, I hope you will continue to listen and I also hope you'll tell others. Also, in keeping with our Creating Elmers one podcast at a time philosophy, if you learn something from our podcasts....please share that knowledge with others.

Welcome back to another episode of The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast, I'm so glad you've returned. The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast, a proud member of the Tech Podcast Network. If it's tech, it's here.

Just before we dive into our content for this episode, I wanted to briefly mention the summer of podcasts, podcast madness contest that I'm participating in. Currently there are over 25 different podcasts participating in the podcast madness contest. The contest runs from June 1 through Sept 30th. All you need to do is listen to the QRP version of the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast for the weekly code. You'll take that code and enter it into a form over at [Podcastmadness.com](http://Podcastmadness.com) to win lots of really cool prizes. Again....listen to the Practical Amateur Radio Podcast - QRP version #9 which should be available Wednesday, June 2nd for the code. Oh....and good luck.

Now, If you listen to both the full version and the QRP version of the podcast (and I hope you do and I hope you get something from each) you heard me ask the following questions at the end of QRP #8.

The ARRL Field Day is just one month away. Can you believe it? Are you ready? Have you found a Field Day location to attend?

During the month of June, leading up to that awesome weekend known as Field Day weekend I'm going to talk about topics to help you during Field Day. I'm hopeful the discussions will be of interest to you regardless of whether this is your first Field Day or you've attended so many you have simply lost count.

Either way, Field Day is less than one month away....time is ticking and we need to make sure you all have a Field Day location to attend. So having said that...let's start with that topic.

How do you find a Field Day location in your area? This is perhaps an easy question for those of you who have participated in the ARRL Field Day for many years. The answer is probably the same each year...or close to it. You'll probably setup for Field Day in the same location. Easy enough right?

For those of you who are new to the hobby or have never attended Field Day....you may not know where to go. If this is the case, the first step and honestly the easiest is for you to look to your local amateur radio club. More than likely your local amateur radio club will be setting up for field day and I bet they could use your help.

Just like the overall subject of amateur radio, Field Day means different things to different people. Unfortunately, some clubs may not participate at all, others might do a very scaled back version of Field Day and some pull out all the stops and their clubs Field Day event is as big as the club itself.

If you've been attending your club meetings, I'm sure this has been discussed and you may already know where and when to show up.

If you're not affiliated with a local club or your local club is not participating during the 2010 Field Day....don't worry. The ARRL has you covered. Just visit the ARRL Field Day Locator. You can find this by visiting [ARRL.org/fieldday](http://ARRL.org/fieldday). Again, [ARRL.org/fieldday](http://ARRL.org/fieldday). Once you get to the ARRL Field Day page, just look for Field Day Site Locator. Click that link. Probably the easiest method is to select the "List by State/Province" link. This will give you the option to select your state in the left hand box. This will then pull up all the registered Field Day sites for your state.

Just quickly looking through the numbers, the State of California has 42 registered stations, the State of Texas with 32, Florida has 31 and Illinois is listing 20. With most of the sites I tested, when you click on the marker on the Google map, it will provide you some basic information about the field day location. Again, in most cases I saw the following items:

The stations callsign and name. This could be the club call sign or an individuals call sign and the same with the name. It might be the club's name and it might be an individuals name.

Next you should see either an address of the location or a basic description of the location.

Next it should state whether that Field Day site will have a GOTA or Get on the Air station. I'm going to talk a little bit more about GOTA stations in just a minute.

Next it may list a "Talk In" frequency. Make note of this. If you get lost trying to find the location, if the site has noted a "talk in" frequency they should have someone monitoring it to help provide directions.

Finally, there should be contact information along with perhaps a telephone number, email address and website.

So basically, if you don't know where to go for Field Day this June 26th/27th, just visit [ARRL.org/fieldday](http://ARRL.org/fieldday). Use the field day locator, find a site near you. It is really just that simple.

Now.....here's some practical advice. If you're unfamiliar with the club or individual hosting the field day site, it might be a good idea to make contact with them via telephone or email in advance. While this is not required.....as if a site and station is listed on the ARRL Field Day Locator site it is intended to be a public and fully 100% open location. But I think a courtesy of making contact with the person listed as the contact would be a good thing to do. Especially if you are interested in helping setup or willing to bring food, drinks or something to contribute to the event.

Second, make sure you have a copy (not the original), but a copy of your license along with photo ID. This is especially crucial if you have never interacted with the club or individuals hosting the site. While you might never be asked to show ID, if you have it...and can provide it...it would certainly be helpful.

Now...more about the GOTA station. If you currently do not have your license, I would strongly suggest that you select a Field Day location which lists having a GOTA station on the Field Day locator map. A GOTA or Get On The Air station is designed for non-license holders, hams who were licensed since last years Field Day and generally inactive license holders. While some clubs can be quite competitive during Field Day, the GOTA station is a more relaxed environment. It is the perfect place to get a taste of working HF and learning more about ham radio in general.

If you are a licensed technician class operator and the Field Day location does not have a GOTA station....don't worry. As long as there is an extra class control operator assigned to the station...you can operate across all the field day bands.

Now..is there any thing you can do as a first time field day participant to help you get ready for the big weekend? Yes.....First of all.....read the 2010 ARRL Field Day Rules. You can find the 2010 rules on the ARRL.org/fieldday page or I will also link to them in the show notes. But review these rules.

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/2010%20FD%20Packet%20February%203.pdf>

Pay special attention to the exchange section. If the Field Day organizers have their act together....they will place tent cards or some other sign or note on each station which includes everything you need to know about the exchange. An example of an exchange might sound like this. W0TX 6A Colorado or it might be heard as W0TX 6A Charlie Oscar. The W0TX is the club call sign. The 6A represents the class of station and the number of stations operating. Of course Colorado or Charlie Oscar is the ARRL section where the Field Day site is located. Keep in mind that some states like Colorado, only have one ARRL section. But for example in Texas, you have three consisting of North Texas, South Texas and West Texas.

Just as important as your exchange....the exchange of the other station is important to understand. If you work me during Field Day and I give you Colorado. What you'll enter in your log book or hopefully in some sort of logging software is simply the abbreviation of Colorado and most everyone knows that is CO Charlie Oscar.

However, what if you're working a station from California and they give you their ARRL section as Santa Clara Valley? Or Los Angeles? What about a non-US station? Will you know how to log them into the logbook or logging software?

The link I'm posting in the show notes will include the complete ARRL Field Day packet. This includes the rules, the entry forms, the W1AW bulletin schedule, press kit information, helpful tips and at the very back it includes the ARRL Contest Section Abbreviation List. I still say that if your Field Day organizer is worth his salt, this information will be posted at every station. But just in case it's not, it is still helpful information to have handy both in your shack, in your portable setup and also in your head.

Now what else can you do to get ready for Field Day weekend? If you have an HF radio and an HF antenna, spend some time between now and Field Day weekend listening on the bands. Take time on Saturday and Sunday between now and then to listen to some of the special event stations and/or contests taking place. Listen and hear the call signs in the pileup. Next listen and write the call signs down that you hear in the pileup. Also try listening and typing the call signs into Wordpad or Notepad. This will help get your ears in tune with your pencil and/or fingers as you type & write.

If you don't have an HF radio and antenna at your home, then visit [www.websdr.org](http://www.websdr.org). I mentioned WebSDR.org during episode 39 as they were the featured website segment. But listen to these receivers and tune your ears up.

Now, a third way to prepare yourself is to spend some time operating during the ARRL June VHF QSO Party coming up on June 12 - 14. The contest objective is to work as many amateur stations in as many different 2 degrees x 1 degree grid squares as possible using authorized frequencies above 50 MHz. So this includes 6 meters (also known as the magic band), 2 meters, 1 and a quarter meters, 70cm, 33cm and even higher. This is a fun contest and while it's not taking place on the HF bands, participation in this contest even on a smaller scale will help get you ready for Field Day.

You can visit the show notes for this episode, episode 40 for a link to the June VHF QSO Party. I'll talk a little more about the June VHF QSO party during the practical amateur radio podcast, QRP episode # 10 which should be available on June 9th.

<http://www.arrl.org/june-vhf-qso-party>

One more thought about Field Day. If you're new to amateur radio and new to Field Day, you'll find that most field day sites will use two operator teams per band. One operator will operate the radio and the other operator will log. You BOTH must listen....you BOTH must know what is happening on the bands. When one of you can't pull the call sign out of the mud, the other hopefully will. While it is fun to operate the radio, you should also spend time in the logging seat. Stay alert, stay awake and enjoy the fast paced atmosphere of Field Day 2010.

### **Featured Website Segment**

And now for our Featured Website Segment. In keeping with the Field Day theme, our featured website is ARRL.org/fieldday. While I've talked a lot about the rules and other guidelines available in the 2010 Field Day packet and of course the Field Day locator tool, there's still a lot of information available. Take some time and visit ARRL.org/fieldday to fully educate yourself for all the fun and excitement of Field Day 2010.

By the way, there's still plenty of time to order your 2010 ARRL Field Day logo gear. Caps, t-shirts, participation pins and coffee mugs are just a few of the items you can pickup for Field Day. I've made it a annual tradition to pickup the new participation pin to collect. This year was the first year I purchased a cap.

Again, just visit [www.arrl.org/fieldday](http://www.arrl.org/fieldday)

<http://www.arrl.org/files/file/On%20the%20Air/Field%20Day/2010%20ARRL%20Field%20Day%20Logo.jpg>

### **Our Fellow Amateurs**

I created the "Our Fellow Amateurs" segment well over a year ago....it may have even been soon after I created the podcast. So if that is the case it could be two years old. I created this segment to showcase amateurs who are going above and beyond for the hobby and service of amateur radio. I've featured many awesome hams in this segment.

Today will be the first time I featured someone who has gone "silent key". This ties into a blog post I wrote back on May 20th titled "The Right Way, The Wrong Way and does it really matter?" You can read this blog post by visiting my blog. The URL is kd0bik.com/blog and that link will be in the show notes.

The gentleman I'm going to introduce you to...well you've heard me talk about this ham many times....yes, I'm talking about Paul Segal, W9EEA who wrote the Amateur's Code back in 1928. I've attempted to find out more about Mr. Segal, but have been unsuccessful.

The one legacy Mr. Segal left for us all is his Radio Amateur's Code. This code is simple, yet extremely powerful. I look at like this. If everyone followed this simple, yet powerful code...ham radio would be even more awesome than it is.

Like I said, I've talked about this code before. I've shared how I have it printed and hanging in my shack and I also have copies in my go-kit. While I didn't say this at the time....if you remember back to the multipart series I did on Emergency Communications and I talked about some of the important items to have in your go-kit.....Well...we need to add one more. That is a copy of the Amateur's Code.

You might not have a clue as to what I'm talking about. What Radio Amateur's Code? Well....if you don't know what it is...you're in luck. If you already know what it is....then sit back, relax and take it in again. I'm going to read the Amateur's Code and explain what each element means to me.

### **The Radio Amateur is**

**Considerate...** never knowingly operates in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.

To me considerate means never causing any on-air disturbance, not keying up over a frequency in use...always listening, listening and listening a little more before asking if the frequency is in use.

**Loyal...**offers loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs, the radio society in his/her country, through which amateur radio in his/her country is represented nationally and internationally.

Part of my drive to bring you this podcast falls into the "loyal" category. But you don't need to start a podcast to exhibit this important part of the code. If you belong to a club...participate and be active in the club. Share your ideas....don't have a club newsletter, then help start one. If you're a member of your radio society....be active. When asked to support something....go support it. A good example is the HR 2160 bill here in the US. While I've partially joked in saying....support HR2160 even if you live out in the country and have no HOA or city ordinances...the antenna you save might be mine. Yes that is somewhat humorous...but it is true. We as amateurs need to come together and support the greater good....the bigger picture.

**Progressive...** He/She keeps his/her station up to date. It is well-built and efficient. His/Her operating practice is above reproach.

This doesn't mean going out and buying the latest and greatest radios when they come out...but that is of course fun to do. But what it does mean (or means to me anyway) is to always keep my station in fully functioning order. This is why I do my antenna inspections twice per year. It is also why I talk about doing my antenna inspections twice a year on the podcast....to get you to think about it as well.

I also see progressive as not stopping the aspect of learning just because I've reached a specific amateur class. I read as much as I can get my hands on. QST, CQ and RadCom feature a lot of informative topics. Yes, I'll be the first to admit that when I first receive a new magazine I go from front cover to back cover and scan all the articles and ads. But I then start drilling into it and it might take me an entire month, but I will get through all the content. Again....there are a lot of good nuggets in there.

Another way of viewing this...especially the knowledge piece is this. I simply do not know everything about amateur radio. I know some incredible fellow hams and while some may think they know it all...they don't. No one knows everything. So having said this. Don't be afraid to ask questions and sometimes before asking the question...try to find the answer on your own. In most cases, when I research something either online or from a book, I'll learn many other things I didn't know.

I also view progressive as an example of all the amateur radio social media sites. Regardless if they are just specific to amateur radio like 73s.org, QRZ, eham etc. or if they are Twitter or Facebook. While some amateurs do not see the importance of social media and amateur radio...it is happening and it is good for the hobby.

Finally, progressive to me means having A+ operating skills and trying to help as many other operators also possess these same skills.

**Friendly...** He/She operates slowly and patiently when requested; offers friendly advice and counsel to the beginner; kind assistance, cooperation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the marks of the amateur spirit.

I can actually sum this up with one word. Elmer. You all know what the term Elmer means and you all know how you can easily become an Elmer.

**Balanced...** Radio is a hobby, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.

Yes, I will admit that I do struggle with this one and I know many of you do as well. There have been times I've been tempted to let the need to record a podcast episode take away from the need to do something around the house. Or a contest or the desire to work a special event station tempt me away from my duties. I also know some younger folks struggle to do their homework first and then play radio afterwards.

I think the take-away from this is...first, no one said this would be 100% easy. Second...think of it as a reward system. Fulfill the tasks and responsibilities owed to family, job, school, community, church, friends etc. etc. first...then reward yourself with the enjoyment of being able to spend time in your shack and do this guilt free.

**Patriotic...** His/Her station and skills are always ready for service to country and community.

Amateur radio is both a hobby and a service. I've said this before, but it is true. Amateur radio is different things to different people. Some do not participate in emergency communications or have anything to do with the service aspect. This is fine. I know others who only use amateur radio as a service. They never spend time on the air just enjoying the hobby side. This is also OK.

Someone who never uses ham radio as a service is no less patriotic than someone who only participates on the service side. To me, just being involved in amateur radio, being active in

amateur radio and following the other five areas of the code qualifies you or anyone else as fulfilling their patriotic duty.

So those are my comments and feelings about the Radio Amateur's Code. If there is one item I feel Mr. Segal left out or didn't hammer home enough is Safety. I know 1928 was a completely different time and perhaps safety was just assumed. But if I could add one more element to Mr. Segal's code it would read like this.

The Radio Amateur is...Safe. He/She keeps safety as the number one priority and never operates or does anything which could harm himself/herself or others.

What are your thoughts? What does the amateur's code mean to you?

### **Featured Gadget Segment**

Amateur Radio is all about gadgets. One might even just say that ham radio as a whole is just one big gadget. Many of the gadgets that make our hobby so enjoyable can range from a price of free all the way up to hundreds, if not thousands of dollars. Through this segment I hope to introduce you to many gadgets that hopefully will enhance your enjoyment of this wonderful hobby.

Our featured gadget is actually a software application called WorkedGrids. WorkedGrids was created by Bertrand Zauhar, VE2ZAZ.

WorkedGrids is a Windows application that displays a map showing the amateur radio grid squares contacted and logged in using a third-party logging program. WorkedGrids uses colors to display information on a per-band basis. Up to four bands can be displayed concurrently.

The software is directed towards the VHF and above operators who collect grid squares for contesting or award purpose. For that purpose, WorkedGrids also calculates the number of grid square worked for each band. It is designed to supplement a logging program and it replaces the pen and paper technique.

If you're just starting out collecting grid squares. Don't forget the ARRL VHF QSO Party coming up on June 12 - 14th.

<http://www.ve2zaz.net/WorkedGrids/WorkedGrids.htm>

Until next time, 73 to all from KD0BIK.

This has been The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast. The Practical Amateur Radio Podcast is written and produced by Jerry Taylor. You may contact Jerry by email at [kd0bik@arrl.net](mailto:kd0bik@arrl.net) or by visiting his website at [www.myamateurradio.com](http://www.myamateurradio.com). The practical amateur radio podcast and myamateurradio.com are protected under the Creative Commons license. Please see myamateurradio.com for details.